

### Later Seasons

In 1985 the record concerning Co-Rec football and other areas of Hinman College becomes even more incomplete. The *Hinman Halitosis* newsletter no longer put out large spreads on covering the Co-Rec season as they had done in the past. Other documentation concerning the subject is limited as well. What is known is that in 1985 the championship game was played between Come On Down and Getting Down, with the former being the winner. In 1986 Busch Longnecks played the team simply called X and won in the Super Bowl. In 1987 the championship was won by Cleat Me over their rival Our Gang Bang. Following that the team names disappear and are replaced by the hall and floor number. Hinmanites still came up with the wild and wacky names for their teams, but the written records only show hall and floor numbers. While most Co-Rec teams came from a single floor within a hall, it is unclear whether these teams had another name or simply went by their hall and floor, which was the case at times. From 1988 to 1996 the record of Super Bowl winners is as follows:

1988	Roosevelt 2B
1989	Smith 3A
1990	Lehman 2A
1991	Lehman 3A
1992	Roosevelt Pitts
1993	Cleveland 3B
1994	Smith 1B
1995	Cleveland 1A
1996	Lehman 3A

Unfortunately, this is all that the written record shows. While it is certain that Co-Rec seasons occurred following 1996, the record was not kept and until the fall 2003 season and it is unknown who won the Hinman Co-Rec Super Bowl in-between. The Robert F. Giomi Plaque still rests in the Hinman Library display case, but the names of the teams, their buildings, and any memory of what went on during those seasons is all but forgotten. From here on, this

chapter relies on oral history passed down from eyewitnesses to the events. The only way for a complete record the season to be known is for alumni who played to game to contact me and relate their stories.

Perhaps the biggest challenge to the game of Co-Rec occurred sometime in the circa 1993. Previously, violence, hyper-competitiveness and unsportsmanlike conduct put the future of Co-Rec in jeopardy. However, these were all internal problems that were solved within Hinman. The biggest threat that would arise in the history of Co-Rec football would come from the outside. During this era, two different lawsuits were filed against Co-Rec. In one instance, a player ran into a tree and was injured. This individual filed a lawsuit against the university seeking damages. Shortly after this, another lawsuit was filed when another player fell on the field and broke an ankle. In both instances, the attorneys for these individuals claimed negligence on the university's part for not removing known hazards and for not doing more to keep the quad in better shape. In both cases, the lawsuits were thrown out. It was ruled that those who played Co-Rec chose to do so on their own accord and knew the risks involved. At first it seemed that the danger was over, though in reality it was just beginning.<sup>i</sup>

The university, fearful of future lawsuits and rising insurance fees tried to take greater control of the sport. At first, the university considered banning the sport all together. For a while they even threatened to tear up the quad and build a macadam path across it. This would have prevented play from occurring there. Hinman students threatened to make a lot of noise during the spring open houses and advise prospective students from attending the university. They even forced the university to put into writing that they would never pave the quad in order to ensure that it was safe.<sup>ii</sup> Then the university took Co-Rec out the control of Hinman College and transferred it to the Campus Recreation department. For a time Campus Rec required that

Co-Rec football be played strictly with flags, so that it mimicked the more traditional flag football. Traditionally, Co-Rec had been two-hand touch style. While to an outside observer the change to flags may have seemed petty, it went against the twenty-year tradition of two-hand touch Co-Rec football in Hinman. Eventually, Co-Rec was able to go back to the traditional two hand touch format.<sup>iii</sup>

Still, the issue of the Hinman Quad remained. Since the very beginning of the sport, Co-Rec had been played on the quad because of its central location in Hinman and because it was the only flat grassy area in close proximity to the halls. It was true that the quad was a danger at times. The tree-lined quad, while certainly picturesque, was a hazard for overzealous players who could accidentally run into the trees. The dirt path that cut through the quad was also a hazard as was the drainage area near Cleveland and the heat exhaust pipe toward Hughes. The university now effectively banned anyone from playing Co-Rec on the Hinman Quad because they deemed it far too hazardous. The only other option that the university offered was to play the games on the fields by the East Gym. This did not sit well with Hinmanites who by their very nature are traditionalists, but also because it was not fair to have Co-Rec players walk all the way down to the East gym to play the game that had been invented in Hinman. The university then offered a compromise. If Hinman promised to no longer play Co-Rec on the quad, then a new Co-Rec field would be built. HCC put aside money in the budget to build a new Co-Rec field, which was built behind Roosevelt Hall and became the official Co-Rec football field for Hinman. Originally, this field was supposed to be set up with lights so that night games could be played. Dwindling daylight, especially later in the season, had caused many games to be abruptly halted and/or postponed. The lights were supposed to stop this problem and allow Hinmanites to play their favorite pastime anytime, day or night. However,

the money somehow got holed up with the Student Association, which was supposed to retain it and roll it over for the following year, which they never did. As a result the Co-Rec field was built, albeit without the lights. Between 1992 and 1993 the Co-Rec field was constructed and became the official arena for Co-Rec football games. The drawbacks of this field was that it was no longer in a central location and the lack of the dining hall meant that fans would have to watch the game outside in the elements (oftentimes fans would go into the dining hall and watch the games from the windows, especially during bad weather). Some of the positives of this field were that there were no trees and no other hazards, which meant that lawsuits would become a non-issue. Eventually this field gained acceptance as the official Co-Rec playing field of Hinman. In 1995 this field was dedicated forever as Sterling Field in honor of Nick Sterling, the current Faculty Master of Hinman and who would go on to become the longest serving Faculty Master in Hinman history.<sup>iv</sup> Besides Sinisi Park, this would be the only spot in Hinman that would dedicated in honor of a Hinman Faculty Master.<sup>1</sup>

With the creation of Sterling Field, it would seem that many of the problems associated with Hinman Co-Rec would finally be resolved. Unfortunately, old specters of the past began to haunt Co-Rec football. In the November 6, 1992, issue of the *Hinman Halitosis* newsletter, Scott Jaffee, the Co-Rec Football Public Affairs Commissioner, wrote an article to dispute some of the claims against the sport.

As one of the commissioners of co-rec [sic] football, I feel it is my responsibility to respond to Ellen Hoffman's article in the previous issue [of *Halitosis*]. It was one of our main concerns this year to cut back on the amount of injuries which plagued the sport in the past. To this extent, the referees are doing an excellent job in their efforts towards attaining this goal. Although there are teams thriving on an aggressive, run-and-block style of offense, there is no longer a presence of teams which rely on bully tactics and

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<sup>1</sup> Sinisi Park, though never officially recognized, was located where the Lot M parking lot now is. Only a small grassy area remains. Also, one of the theaters in the Fine Arts Building was named after the first Faculty Master of Hinman, Christian P. Gruber, though it is not located in Hinman and the dedication plaque does not recognize Gruber as a Faculty Master.

intimidation. Except for the occasional captain who tends to get out of control (I myself fall into this category), the number of incidents during games has been held to a minimum.

As for the suggestion that games should not be held on the quad, as well as cancelled every time it rains, this is obviously a pointer from someone with little experience in the sport. First of all, the turnout and interest in the sport would plummet if teams were forced to trek to Hillside or West Gym for a co-rec game. Secondly, the field, as it does every year, has reached a saturation point which will not change until the snow begins to fall. Ellen seems to realize that we live in a one of the rainiest areas of New York. Thus, if we cancelled a game every time it drizzled, we would wind up holding the Super Bowl some time next August. And finally, because of the slippery ground, the pace of the game has dramatically decreased, and so have the injuries. I have watched at least ten games a week, and the most serious incident is a belly flop into the infamous puddle near the Hughes end zone. In reality, the game has become much safer since the field softened up.

Admitably [sic], the mud has caused a change in the style and strategy of the game. But, how teams cope with the weather and conditions is a major factor which separates the good teams from the bad. To suggest that there is an injury problem which threatens the continuance of the game is an unfounded and wholly incorrect opinion. After all, co-rec may not be featured at Homecoming any time soon, but it's the closest thing we have to real football around here. The only true problem with this sport is that if you are putting your heart into it, you will get dirty. Such is the game of football. Anyone who has a problem with this has no business on a football field, co-rec or otherwise. And, they certainly have no right to criticize those who are still enjoying themselves out there. The referees are doing an outstanding job in assuring that the game functions smoothly, and we look forward to the upcoming play-offs, which should be around Friday, November 6<sup>th</sup>.

Injuries were nothing new to Co-Rec. Since the very beginning of the sport, players had been getting hurt, some rather seriously, not because of malicious intent, but because they, as Scott Jaffee said, were pouring their heart and soul into and getting dirty. While it was not inappropriate for concerns to be raised regarding this issue, those who played Co-Rec did so with the realization that they did so at their own risk. In reality, this risk was reasonably small and as just about any Co-Rec player will tell you, the rewards of playing this all inclusive sport were great.

The 1992 Super Bowl winner, the Roosevelt Pitts also won the campus wide Co-Rec Football championship. In the semi-final game, Chip Cariola scored the first touchdown and Mike Orlando (the RA in the Pitts) shone on defense with a total of eight interceptions, several of which he ran back for touchdowns. Lou Smith and Michael Brownstein also aided on the defense. On the offense, key players included Scott Lewis, Chad Coleman, Nicole Pedone, Colleen Conklin, Tira Yaskulski, and Katie Solomon. They played against the CIW team and shut them out 56-0. The championship game was played against Dickinson Community's Gang Green in the snow and in freezing temperatures. Mike Orlando once again showed his defensive skills and intercepted numerous passes and scored two touchdowns. Another touchdown came from a fake run which resulted in a pass from Nicole Pedone to Mary [surname unavailable] who ran in for the score. The final score of the championship game was 75-6.<sup>vi</sup> This achievement in Hinman Co-Rec history was astounding. The victory of the Hinman team over all the other residential colleges brought much needed pride back to Hinman. Hinman College is the birthplace of Co-Rec, a very special sport that had provided much-needed recreation to quite literally thousands of Hinmanites over the years and had spread to other residential colleges at Binghamton and to colleges and universities across the country. The problems and issues that had plagued the sport since the controversial season of 1984 and the lawsuits of the early 1990's which nearly killed the sport in Hinman, were all but erased forever. Co-Rec football in Hinman had survived its greatest challenges and would remain a part of Hinman forever.

Unfortunately, the record in the *Hinman Halitosis* newsletter stops at the end of the 1992-1993 academic year. The record of Co-Rec football that year was sparse, as it was for many of the years in the late 1980's and early 1990's. Undoubtedly, seasons occurred after 1996 (the last year where Super Bowl champions were recorded on the Robert F. Giomi Plaque) and

championship games were played, but there is no record available that documents them. This time period in Hinman history is a sort of dark age where relatively little information is known and unless those who lived through it come forward with their stories and their memories, it probably never will be known. The record does pick up again early in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. With the dawning of a new millennium a new era of Co-Rec emerged, an era that would see perhaps that greatest player who ever played the game take to the hallowed ground of Sterling Field and participate in some of the most exciting and dramatic Co-Rec action ever to occur within the bounds of Hinman College.

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<sup>i</sup> Rene Coderre, interview with author, October 10, 2006.

<sup>ii</sup> Nick Sterling, "Co-Rec Football," Stories of Hinman College, May 6, 2000, on file in the Hinman Archives.

<sup>iii</sup> Rene Coderre, interview with author, October 10, 2006.

<sup>iv</sup> Ibid.

<sup>v</sup> Scott D. Jaffee, "Co-Rec Commissioner's Counterpoint," *Hinman Halitosis* Vol. 24, No. 2, November 6, 1992.

<sup>vi</sup> "Pitts Superbowl Champs," *Hinman Halitosis* Vol. 24, No. 4, December 11, 1992.